



International Boundary and Water Commission United States Section

For immediate release

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RIO GRANDE FLOODING CONTINUES AT PRESIDIO, TEXAS-OJINAGA, CHIHUAHUA

The U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) advises that a segment of the United States Rio Grande flood control levee in a rural area near Alamito Creek downstream of the City of Presidio, Texas was overtopped and failed, sending floodwaters onto adjacent farmland and a golf course. On September 18, this water began backing up on the land side of the Rio Grande levee toward the urban area of Presidio. The USIBWC is currently coordinating with state and local emergency managers to begin sandbagging operations in an effort to prevent this water from flooding the City of Presidio. River levees adjacent to the City remain intact. Rio Grande flow peaked on the night of September 16 and has decreased somewhat since then.

On the Mexican side, the failure of levees on the Rio Grande and its tributary, the Conchos River, has caused widespread flooding in Ojinaga, Chihuahua. Floodwaters have inundated Ojinaga's wastewater treatment plant, sending sewage into the Rio Grande approximately two miles downstream of the international railroad bridge.

The USIBWC operates and maintains 15 miles of Rio Grande flood control levees in the Presidio area, providing protection to 5403 acres of land on the United States side of the Presidio-Ojinaga Valley. The U.S. levees range in height from 6 to 14 feet and protect the river reach between Haciendita and Alamito Creek.

Since late August, flood conditions have existed on the Conchos River, a Mexican tributary that flows into the Rio Grande at Presidio-Ojinaga. Mexican dams on the Conchos River are full and spilling floodwaters. These flows have created flood conditions in the Rio Grande. USIBWC crews have been in active flood fight operations since September 5, conducting regular levee patrols, using heavy equipment and sandbags to repair levee seepage and sand boils as needed. Over 50 additional USIBWC employees and heavy equipment from other USIBWC offices have been deployed to Presidio to assist in flood fight operations, including sandbagging. The USIBWC has also been coordinating closely with Mexican officials regarding flows and dam releases on the Conchos River.

In an effort to protect the City of Presidio from being inundated by water backing up from the failed levee downstream, USIBWC engineers have recommended sandbagging under the railroad trestle near the Rio Grande. The State of Texas has deployed additional resources to the area for the sandbagging operation, including personnel and helicopters capable of placing enormous sandbags in the gap.

At Amistad Dam at Del Rio, Texas-Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila, a dam and reservoir operated jointly by the U.S. and Mexican Sections of the International Boundary and Water Commission, reservoir storage is increasing as the high flows of the Rio Grande move downstream. Forecasts indicate the dam has the potential to be at or near conservation capacity toward the end of September. As of September 18, storage was at 82% of capacity.

Farther downstream at Falcon Dam at Falcon Heights, Texas-Nueva Ciudad Guerrero, Tamaulipas, storage was at 50% of conservation capacity.

Residents concerned about Rio Grande flood conditions should continue to monitor National Weather Service forecasts and any announcements from local emergency managers.

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